

Fort Des Moines Historic Complex,
Building 81
(Cavalry Stable)
Des Moines
Polk County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-121-S

HABS
IOWA,
77-DESMO,
24-S-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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Building No. 81. Stable

This stable barn, finished on January 23, 1904, conformed with plan 139 in the Quartermaster General's Office and was erected at a cost of \$16,015.71. Fronting on Thayer Street, the structure was of brick in running bond joined with red-pigmented mortar, a slate roof and rested on a rusticated limestone foundation. It measured 67 feet wide by 165 feet long and had a gabled roof with a louvered monitor with windows along the ridge. The sides of the structure each contained two double hung windows at the north end, plus thirteen single sash windows and a door. (These single sash windows appear to have been subsequently lengthened into double hung windows.) At either end was a double sliding door with five double hung windows. All windows had 3-course segmental arches and limestone lug sills. Door entrances also had segmental arches.

Total floor space comprised 12,878 square feet. The building had wooden floors, brick driveways, and dirt on the floors of the stalls. It could accommodate ninety horses. The interior was divided as follows:

First floor:

4 rooms, 9' 8" x 10' 7"
1 room, 19' 6" x 42'
6 box stalls, 9' 11' x 10'
43 double stalls, 9' 11" x 10'

Attic:

Room, 9' 8" x 19' 6"

The building had electric lighting and stove heating. There were ten water closets and one urinal, besides water line and sewer connections. From 1904 to 1922 repairs to Building No. 81 averaged

approximately \$39.00 per year. On November 19, 1910, a corral fence was built adjacent to the stables, costing \$551.54. The building was connected to adjacent Building No. 83 by a frame runway similar to those joining the other stable barns. In May, 1940, approval was granted for converting the structure into a forty-vehicle garage, a project that entailed enlargement of the entrances.

In 1942 a rear addition of brick was constructed at the south side of Building No. 81. It had an asphalt-shingled gable roof, concrete foundation, measured 66 feet 6 inches wide by 53 feet long, and was similar in appearance and purpose to those previously discussed. At the same time the frame walkway leading to Building No. 83 was replaced by one of brick with asphalt roof. Other changes to the former stable consist of the closing of the windows and ventilators on the monitor with horizontal boarding followed by the addition of louvered ventilators there, the bricking up of the left entrance and a doorway on the north side, the conversion of two windows to doors complete with modern frame vestibules on the west side, and the alteration of a barn door to a window on that side. A concrete porch and stairs has been built on the south side of the addition, while on the east side all windows and doors have been bricked up. A modern vestibule with gable roof is also on the north side. In 1987 the structure was vacant. At that time its overall condition was fair.(33)

33. Card for Building No. 81. "Historical Record of Buildings." NA, RG 77, Box No. 51; Field survey notes, February 20-22, 1987. QMG Plan No. 139 was not located in NA, Cartographic Archives Division.